

USPS Recognizes Service Cross Recipients

by John F. Dunn

This issue continues a Postal Service tradition of honoring the bravery and achievements of members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

In the aftermath of World War II, in 1946 the Post Office Department issued a stamp depicting the Honorable Discharge Emblem. This was followed in 1948 by the Gold Star Mothers issue to honor the mothers of deceased members of the Armed Forces who were killed during World War I and later wars.

Since 1983, USPS issues have depicted the Medal of Honor. These new stamps honor recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross (Army), Navy Cross (Navy and Marine Corps), Air Force Cross, and Coast Guard Cross.

The Distinguished Service Cross was the first of these awards to be established, in 1918, followed the next year by the Navy Cross. The Air Force Cross was instituted in 1960, following the creation of the Air Force as a separate military service independent from the Army.



The Coast Guard Cross was only recently instituted, in 2010, to recognize its members for qualifying actions taken when not operating under the Department of the Navy or during military operations against international terrorists. This decoration is yet to be awarded.

Many recipients of these awards died or were severely wounded as a result of the heroic actions for which they were honored, while a number

of others died in subsequent battles before receiving the award for their earlier actions. Many recipients rescued wounded service members or drew enemy fire to buy time for others to regroup or be rescued. Some continued fighting despite their own wounds.

According to official accounts, all braved enemy fire, made bold decisions, and took selfless actions to rescue or protect their fellow service members. These medals pay homage to such heroic actions and dedication to duty.